



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Gannett, Address before the Boston
Sunday School Society. 1831

2122
131



Educ 2122.131



HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY





3 2044 096 983 846

©

F. 12



*Rev. F. A. Farley.
for his friend
E. H.*

Q

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

BOSTON SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY,

ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL INSTITUTION,

AT THE FEDERAL STREET CHURCH,

SEPTEMBER 14, 1831.

22663
BY EZRA S. GANNETT.

BOSTON:

GRAY AND BOWEN,

GENERAL AGENTS FOR THE

BOSTON SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY.

1831.

Educ 2122.131

✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

1850 Jan. 30.

Life of Rev. F. & Faleys

of Brooklyn, N. Y.
(H. U. 1818.)

A D D R E S S .

AMONG the various epithets which have been applied to the passing times, none is more just than that which has described this as the age of benevolent enterprise. Whether we consider the number of institutions which have been projected for the relief and improvement of humanity, the activity with which they have been conducted, the extent embraced within their plans, and often covered by their operations, or the effects that have actually resulted, we cannot but perceive that a large amount of means has been created and put into action for the moral benefit of mankind.

Among these means, the Sunday school holds an important place. From its immediate connexion with the best interests of the world, from the character of those around whom it spreads its influence, from the support which it has received from enlightened and excellent men, and from the great power which it is exerting, and the still greater power which it seems destined to exert, this institution deserves the respectful notice, — I will not yet say, the warm sympathy — of the patriot and the Christian. It is exerting a great power; we probably speak within the bounds of truth when

we say that more than 2,000,000 children are taught in the Sunday schools of Christendom; in this country it has been estimated that at least 600,000 are placed under this kind of instruction. What an amount of intellect, of heart, of soul, subjected to this teaching in the most plastic state, when impressions are most easily made and sink most deeply. It is destined to exert a still greater power; these children will be the future men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers of the country, who will carry into domestic and public life the characters which they receive in these nurseries of the mind, and determine the social influences of the next generation; while as population shall increase, and yet wider compass and more efficiency shall be given to this institution — the fruits of experience in its management, and of gratitude for its benefits, it will descend along the stream of time with accumulated force, to act with a still broader decision upon the destinies of the land. It is supported by enlightened and excellent men; by men of clear judgment, of careful habits of thought, of generous purposes; men, who love their country, their race, and their God; who have comprehended the light of the gospel, and have reflected it on the people among whom they live. The institution borrows interest from the character of those whom it takes in its arms; — the young, the children, those whose presence is a rebuke of selfishness, whose thirst for knowledge is an incentive to labor for their instruction, whose hearts, that have never yet borne a harvest either of good or of evil, invite one to throw in even as by chance the seeds of virtue and piety, whose exposure to danger awakens an anxiety which their loveliness but renders more solicitous. It is connected im-

mediately with the best interests of the world; for its object is to form those to whom these interests will soon be confided, who if they understand and discharge their duty may 'make straight paths for the Lord' through the errors and evils which now obstruct the progress of his religion, or if from ignorance or negligence they fail to serve the cause of righteousness may themselves multiply the difficulties of the passage. It is associated with the best interests of the world; for what are they but truth, freedom, virtue, piety and happiness, and to these—to their discovery, their diffusion, and their establishment, the Sunday school is devoted in all its parts, in all its purposes.

Since this institution is so well entitled to our regard—since its capacities of usefulness are so great and its benefits so easily secured, it may surprise one not acquainted with the history of the world to learn that it is of recent origin. But one who considers how many of the simplest and most effectual means now in exercise for the good of the human race are the fruit of modern ingenuity, enterprise or philanthropy, will not wonder that an instrument so accordant with the genius of the christian religion, and so strikingly adapted to the wants and the circumstances of human nature, should have lain for ages undiscovered.

We are met this evening to celebrate the jubilee of Sunday schools—the fiftieth anniversary of their foundation. The merit of this work is ascribed to Robert Raikes, and there can be no doubt that his exertions and the success which attended them first led to a development of those resources in the constitution of society, which have since been drawn out to such wonderful results. It is not without reason, that over a large

part of the Protestant world this his birthday has been observed as a season of holy rejoicing, for the introduction of one of the most efficient powers ever brought to act upon the personal or social interests of man.

But if the philanthropist, who by collecting ignorant, neglected children from the streets and paying a few shillings a Sunday for their instruction has secured an honorable and everlasting remembrance as one of the benefactors of our race, were alive, he would disapprove of any attempt to bestow on him higher praise than he deserves. He anticipated no such results as have followed from his humble design; and though his purpose had the character of original conception in his mind, a similar purpose had not only been conceived but been carried into effect years before. Mrs Catharine Cappe in her *Memoirs of her own Life** relates, that having on a visit to the excellent Mr Lindsey, before his resignation of his living in the Church, been delighted with his method of teaching on Sunday not only the children of the parish but the boys of a large school kept in the village, she resolved on her return to Bedale, a little market town in Yorkshire, to imitate the example which she so much admired. Her account of the manner in which she executed her purpose is worth repeating. 'I established,' says she, 'a sort of Sunday school at Bedale, collecting together a number of poor children whom I assisted in learning to read, giving them books &c, teaching them Dr Watts's Shorter Catechism together with his Devotional Hymns, and endeavoring to give them some such general instruction as might enable them to read their Bible with more intelligence. I had no place in which to receive them

* See Note I.

except the back kitchen, which being small we were exceedingly crowded. But they grew attached to me, and liked to attend; and in order to prevent confusion, I divided them into classes which succeeded each other; so that on the Sunday I was occupied by a succession of children nearly the whole day except the time which was spent at church.' The precise date of these circumstances is not given, but it must have been before 1770. Two or three more teachers only were wanted, to make this school correspond in all important particulars to a modern Sunday school.

Miss Harrison (she was then unmarried) did not however prosecute her useful labors without inducing unkind remark. She found little sympathy. 'I could not prevail,' she writes, 'upon any of the young people in the town to contribute in any manner in my Sunday school. The experiment was quite new and far from being popular, the attempt was considered enthusiastic and visionary. I was regarded as a well-meaning young woman, but odd and singular; a fair mark for the shafts of ridicule, and one whose society was rather to be avoided than sought after and desired.' The difference between Mr Raikes's Sunday school and that of which Mrs Cappe was sole founder, patron, superintendent and teacher, was that he employed and paid others for doing what she performed in her own person. It is not difficult to determine which hung up the more costly offering in the temple of benevolence. If the group of children in the back kitchen at Bedule bore an imperfect resemblance to one of our Sunday schools, there are as strong points of contrast between the latter and the assembly of 'little ragged ones,' as they are styled by Mr Raikes, whom he engaged 'decent well-disposed women to instruct in

reading and the Church catechism.' It is a diminution of the splendor that has gathered around his name, which leaves it still bright with an unfading lustre, that he must share the glory of establishing this institution with one of that sex to whom the offices of beneficence are, 'like household words,' dear and familiar things.

Neither Mr Raikes nor Mrs Cappe however was the first to put the principle of the Sunday school institution to the test of experiment. The excellent Cardinal Borromeo had brought it into successful practice at Milan two centuries before;* and doubtless others before either of those whom I have named had adopted a similar plan of usefulness. Their efforts may have attracted little notice, and have had a narrow influence. Yet both in Protestant and in Catholic communities there must have been those who felt the claims of ignorant childhood, and saw the propriety of attending to its wants on the day which reminds his disciples of him who came to 'seek and save that which was lost.' It was too plain a dictate of the christian heart, not to be recognised and obeyed by some of the millions who were called after the name of Christ. To Mr Raikes belongs the honor of presenting to the British and American public this method of relieving an incalculable amount of wretchedness, by affording religious instruction and innocent engagement to children on a day which they had been accustomed to make the worst in the week, because it was the most vacant of employment or pleasure; the honor of giving the original impulse to an institution, which has from that time gone on acquiring magnitude and power as it has passed from town to town, from country to country, from continent to continent, till it

* See Note II.

has become one of the most remarkable instruments in the hands of society for the good of its members.

Mr Raikes's account of his undertaking is beautifully simple and modest. 'The beginning of this scheme,' he says, 'was entirely owing to accident.' After describing the miserable appearance of the children in one of the suburbs of Gloucester which he incidentally visited, and relating a conversation which he had with one of the inhabitants, who assured him that on Sunday they presented a yet more sad spectacle; he proceeds, 'this conversation suggested to me that it would at least be a harmless attempt, if it were productive of no good, should some little plan be formed to check this deplorable profanation of the Sabbath. I then inquired of the woman if there were any decent well-disposed women in the neighborhood, who kept schools for teaching to read. I was presently directed to four. To these I applied, and made an agreement with them to receive as many children as I should send on the Sunday, whom they were to instruct in reading and the Church catechism. For this I engaged to pay them each a shilling for their day's employment. The women seemed well pleased with the proposal. I then waited on the clergyman of the parish, and imparted to him my plan. He was so much satisfied with the idea, that he engaged to lend his assistance by going round to the schools on a Sunday afternoon, to examine the progress that was made and to enforce order and decorum among such a set of little heathens. This is the commencement of the plan. It is now about three years since we began,' he adds in the letter from which this extract has been made, 'and I could wish you were here to make inquiry into the effect.' It had astonished even him, its author.

Could he have looked into the future and have contemplated the state of the christian world at the distance of a single half century, what would have been his amazement, to see two million children enjoying the benefits of an institution of which he was esteemed the founder, and the anniversary of the establishment of those four schools in a suburb of the city where he resided celebrated as the jubilee of one of the most beneficent achievements of philanthropy, not only throughout Great Britain but over the immense extent of a republic which was then just struggling into existence on the western continent. Might he not have been content to end his mortal career at that moment, since he had secured an imperishable memorial in the records of the world, — a memorial that should gain celebrity with the progress of ages, and be admired as one of the lights of the moral firmament when most of those on whom applause had been lavished would be regarded with pity or detestation.

Mr Raikes did not seek notoriety. Industrious in his calling, exemplary in his private relations, and faithful in allegiance to his Master, he laid hold on the opportunities which God had given him for usefulness in the sphere which he occupied, and stands before us a remarkable example of the good which may be done without noise or parade by a private individual. He was a native of Gloucester in England. His father was a printer and the publisher of a newspaper in that place. Robert was educated to the same business, and acquired by it a sufficient though not a large property. The first object of magnitude to which his benevolent efforts were directed was the alleviation of the wretchedness, in which the prisoners in the Bridewell of that city passed the term of their confinement; in this attempt

he was successful. His attention was next drawn, as I have already related, to the poor and vicious children in the outskirts of Gloucester. They accepted his proposal to rescue them from their debasement with a readiness which seems to have surprised him, and the benefit was soon apparent. In three years his schools embraced between two and three hundred children, who had been reclaimed from the lowest degradation and promised to become worthy members of society. The manner in which they evinced their gratitude to him is characteristic and touching. 'I am generally,' he says, 'at church, and after service they all come round me to make their bow, and if any animosities have arisen to make their complaint.' After a trial of two years Mr Raikes was so well satisfied of the utility of the plan that he inserted a brief notice of it in the Gloucester paper, in which he gave the whole credit of the scheme to some of the clergy, who, to use his own words, 'were bent upon attempting a reform among the children of the lower class.' This notice fell under the eye of a gentleman in another county, who wrote to Mr Raikes on the subject and received a letter* which I have already quoted, and which was afterwards published in a London Magazine. Through this means the knowledge of his undertaking and of the success with which it had been crowned, was spread over the kingdom, and excited much interest; which soon grew to such a height in the metropolis, that in September 1785, four years after the experiment was tried in an obscure part of a provincial city, a Society was formed 'for the support and encouragement of Sunday schools in the different counties of England.' From this time we may consider the institu-

* See Note III.

tion as organized and in full operation; and with such favor was it received, that at the close of the next year 250,000 children were supposed to be embraced within its care. In two important respects these schools differed from those with which we are acquainted. They afforded instruction in the elementary branches of knowledge, as reading and writing; and they were taught by hired teachers. The first of these peculiarities was rendered necessary by the ignorance of the pupils, but the existence of the second shows us with what feeble steps christian benevolence then advanced. It does not appear to have occurred to any one for some time, that persons could be found willing to devote themselves to the gratuitous labor of teaching. Mr Raikes lived to see these defects in the original scheme removed, and the institution of which he was the father in vigorous and beneficent exercise. He died in his native city in 1811 in his 75th year.

Mr Raikes united many qualities which must secure our respect, independently of the service which he rendered to humanity in this particular relation. He was a truehearted philanthropist, who sought to do good for the sake of the good which he might do, and not to gratify a covert selfishness. He possessed that energy compounded of resolution and perseverance which, as it is indispensable to the accomplishment of any great object, is almost sure to effect it. When he discovered the misery that it was afterwards his privilege to relieve, and the question arose — can nothing be done for these unhappy miscreants, the word ‘try,’ as we are told, presented itself so forcibly to his mind as to decide him upon an instant attempt. ‘Try’ — it is a good motto for every one engaged in the cause of benevolence, and he who

adopts it need not fear ultimate disappointment. In Mr Raikes, philanthropy and energy were guided by a singularly good judgment. This was shown in the methods which he took for obtaining his end, the moderation and patience with which he watched their results, and the nature of the instruction which he gave, either personally or through his agents, to the children whom he had raised from the lowest state of mental and moral existence. 'The great principle I inculcate,' he declares, 'is to be kind and good natured to each other, not to provoke one another, to be dutiful to their parents, not to offend God by cursing and swearing, and such little plain precepts as all may comprehend.' These remarks discover a soundness of judgment not always possessed by the authors of benevolent enterprises. Mr Raikes's modesty threw over the other traits of his character a charm, that preserved the brilliancy which it veiled. In active but quiet usefulness he passed his life, and when he departed to render his account, if the inferiority of his powers might place him below a Newton or a Howard, we may believe — if it be proper for us to anticipate the secrets of judgment — that his sentence did not carry a less decisive proof of his Master's approbation. 'He that had received two talents came and said, Lord thou didst deliver unto me two talents; behold I have gained two other talents besides them. His Lord said unto him, well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

If the fruits which Mr Raikes's humble project has yielded and must yield to the end of time be considered, it may be thought that he should hold a place among the chief benefactors of mankind. How descriptive of this institution is the parable of Christ concerning his

religion. 'It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which when it is sown is the least of seeds, but it grew, and became greater than all herbs, and waxed a great tree, and shot out great branches.' It has not been confined to the island in which it originated. The continents of Europe and America, Asia and Africa, have welcomed it to their shores. Wherever Christianity enjoys a seat, the Sunday school has been or will be known. All that their early patron dared to hope from them after nearly three years had proved their efficacy was, that 'their general establishment would in time make some change in the morals of the lower class; at least,' he goes on to say, as if afraid he was too sanguine in his expectations, 'at least it might in some measure prevent them from growing worse.' Admirable humility, that blinded him to the nature of his own conception! He was not animated in clothing it with reality by the thought, that it would before the lapse of a single age be associated with the labors of the christian ministry in every quarter of the globe, and be accounted one of the most powerful influences of the moral world. If from the realms of eternal light his glance has ever surveyed the earth, what emotions must have been felt by that immortal spirit at the wide-spread view of the benefits of which under the divine Providence he was the spring. How many may he not meet in that world, who shall salute him as one to whom though unknown here they were indebted for their entrance into the mansions of peace.

Servant of God, thou'st earned a name
 Rich with the spoils of love;
 On earth 'twill last to latest time,
 Then live in heaven above.

The institution with which the history of this individual is now inseparably connected presents strong claims to our favor; the principal of which are, the excellence of its purpose, the simplicity of its essential idea, the ease with which this idea may be wrought into the forms which different places and conditions of society demand, the efficiency with which these forms are clothed, and the benefits which accrue to the individuals and the community who feel their influence. We have already adverted to these grounds of esteem, but I must beg your indulgence while I more fully exhibit their character.

The purpose of a Sunday school is to instruct children in their relations and duties as moral beings. It is to give them that knowledge which is eternal life — even to ‘know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent.’ It is to prepare them for usefulness on earth and for happiness in heaven. This is the purpose for which all the capacities and processes of the institution are adapted, and to which the teacher should direct his attention as to the only goal of his labors. It is not to make children learned in tongues or expert in sciences; not to teach them how they may acquire wealth or mount to office; it is not to give them superficial accomplishments, nor to train them to display what little they have to most advantage; it is not to initiate them into the secrets of any trade or profession, and not to educate them either for the countinghouse or the pulpit, that they are gathered into these seminaries; — but to teach them that they are the children of God and to make them disciples of Jesus Christ; to fortify their minds with truth and their hearts with right sentiment, that when they grow up and encounter the thousand temptations of evil they may be able to repel or vanquish them; to

inform the young immortal concerning his nature, his origin and his destiny, and thus to prepare men for the service of the world and angels for the joys of heaven. Can there be a nobler purpose? one more worthy of admiration and encouragement? The Sunday school is the creation of the spirit of Christianity. It stands in the name of the Saviour, and says unto all — ‘Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.’ It receives, invites, seeks the little ones who are neglected by their natural guardians, and saves them from the ignorance which is the author of vice and wretchedness. It cooperates with parental fidelity in assisting those who enjoy the advantage of domestic culture, to acquire good dispositions and habits. Every one who is received under its care is contemplated in his most important relations, as a creature whom God loves and who should love God, as one of that race for whom Christ died and who should acknowledge the claim which he has established to their gratitude, as a being who has commenced an endless existence, whose duty is improvement, whose happiness is virtue, whose glory is obedience to the divine will. Regarding the subject of its notice in these positions it uses counsel and persuasion, the force of truth and love, to engage him in the pursuit of those ends which alone are worthy of his efforts. Like the parent bird in the education of her young, it conducts and bears and allures him into the element for which he is created, and shows him how to use his tender faculties, to which exercise will give strength and enlargement.

I know not a holier function than that of the Sunday school teacher. An intermediate agent of the divine purposes between the parent and the clergyman, he is

invested with the peculiar character of each. Their prerogatives meet in him; the tenderness of affection is blended with the sanctity of office; familiarity of approach is chastened by the reverence of the occasion. Confidence on the one part and sympathy on the other, good received and good done, the pleasure of receiving and the pleasure of imparting, unite teacher and pupil in a relation only less delightful and less responsible than that which nature has established between the parent and his offspring. I know not a holier function than that of the Sunday school teacher. It should not be lightly assumed nor carelessly borne, for it brings him who undertakes it into connexion with that most delicate of all the works of divine or human origin, an infant soul, and it imposes on him the duty of bringing the different parts of this delicate workmanship into harmonious action and of communicating to it a self-regulating and self sustaining power. What responsibilities may it not involve! I know not a holier function than that of the Sunday School teacher. It might be coveted by every one who is conscious of a lofty ambition, for it enables him who bears it to lead the thirsting soul to springs of living water, to feed the starving mind on the bread of heaven, to unfold the elements of perfection and to surround them with the influences of faith and hope and love. What satisfactions may it not bestow!

The simplicity of the idea of the Sunday school recommends it to approbation. It is to give to children on Sunday instruction which they would not receive at home. This is the germ of the institution; and in it are contained all the capacities and effects which may be developed by time. The advantage of its simplicity is seen in contrast with that complexity of design which

might embarrass one in using it, or that cumbersome apparatus which would prevent its general introduction. Something was wanted for all classes, countries and ages. The means of supplying this want was discovered even before its character was understood, or indeed its existence known. The application of a new instrumentality revealed a defect in the arrangements of society, which had not been perceived. If we strip the Sunday school enterprise of all that is incidental, occasional and local, and reduce it to its essential principle — that which I have already expressed, and then consider the various circumstances under which it must be applied, and the importance of having a principle which like the great laws of nature shall be of practical advantage everywhere and at all periods, and remember also that the application of this principle must often of necessity be committed to young or unskilful hands, we shall acknowledge the excellence of that idea, which to the mind of Mr Raikes assumed the form that alone could make it efficient for the purpose which he contemplated.

A consequence of its simplicity is the ease with which it may be wrought into the forms which different places and conditions of society demand. Its first appearance was among the poor, the ignorant and the vicious; it has spread itself through all classes. It began in a manufacturing suburb of an English city of comparatively small population; it has been introduced into every community from the commercial capital of the world to the smallest and most secluded village. It soon passed beyond the immediate neighborhood of the place where it originated, and it met a welcome on every side. It traversed the island, penetrated the valleys of Wales,

ascended the hills of Scotland. The sea was not long a barrier to its progress; it found friends alike in the splendid mansions of Dublin and in the hovels of the Irish peasantry. The continent felt its presence. It crossed the ocean, and scarcely was its coming known when its benefits were sought and realized from the cities of the St Lawrence to the southern limit of the United States. It passed over the Alleghanies, it rested not in the Valley of the Mississippi, in company with civilization and christian faith it will visit the eastern shores of the Pacific. The burning climes of Asia, the snow clad regions of northern Europe, the land of the Hottentot, the islands of the ocean, have rejoiced in its fruits. To what varieties of condition, what diversities of character must it have accommodated itself in this circuit of the globe. Its facility of adaptation to different circumstances of a physical, intellectual and moral kind was remarkably exemplified at its introduction into Scotland and Wales. In the northern part of the island, sabbath evening schools were early instituted. Among the mountains of Wales, where few of the aged people could read, they were invited to receive instruction in the Sunday school, and so eagerly was the proposal accepted that we are told the shopkeepers could not furnish them with a sufficient number of spectacles.

In this country we observe a great diversity in the manner of conducting the schools, according to the judgment or circumstances of the persons engaged in them. In our own city how various are the methods pursued, from the ingenious but too elaborate plan adopted by a gentleman, whose labors in this service, as well as in the elucidation of sacred geography, entitle him to our gratitude, to the schools patronized by the Society at

whose invitation we have met this evening, where system is not often maintained at the expense of freedom. Through all these varieties the principle, the idea, is the same.

The favor which this institution has enjoyed among various denominations of Christians is a proof of its flexible character. Its reputed founder was a member of the Established Church, but it was soon adopted by the Dissenters. As early as 1784 the Unitarian society in Birmingham organized a school, which was so liberally supported that in 1820 a building was erected for its use, capable of receiving 600 children.* In this country the four great denominations, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopal, have been zealous supporters of Sunday schools, while the first in Boston was established by a member of the West Church, in 1812; it was a charity school, and was taught by ladies of that society.† Whatever the difference in articles of belief or in forms of ecclesiastical government, Protestants and Catholics have incorporated this institution with the means which they severally use for the benefit of the Church and the world.

Its efficiency is another circumstance that may be urged in its favor. In speaking of its efficiency I mean, that it accomplishes what it undertakes and that it undertakes a great deal. It aims to inform children on the most important subjects, to interest them in the study of those subjects, and through this interest to fix them in good principles and habits. If it attain these ends in one tenth part of the cases submitted to its control, it effects a great deal. If the history of every Sunday

* See Note IV.

† See Note V.

school could be written as it is seen by the Omniscient eye, we should probably be amazed at the results of this instrumentality. A vast amount of positive good is apparent even to our view, and a still larger amount is of too delicate a nature for us to mark its details. There is besides an untold sum of negative good, which should be taken into the account to form an accurate estimate. Evil prevented, error excluded, contagion avoided, shame and remorse escaped — these would belong to the calculation. If doubt could exist concerning the force of the means here used, many an anecdote might be recited, many a touching confession repeated, many a pathetic scene narrated, to prove their efficacy. It would be sufficient, I apprehend, to lead a candid inquirer into one of these schools, and let him contemplate the scene before him. What would he there behold? Groups of children, of different ages, neatly dressed, quietly seated, and pleasantly occupied; the teacher a centre of attraction to each one in the little circle; some listening with a gratification expressed in their glowing countenances; others putting their simple questions in a tone or with an eye that betrays the interest which they feel, others repeating the lesson which it has given them pleasure to learn; all engaged, all happy: — or let the instruction of the classes give place to the address of the superintendent; what silence, what attention, what evident delight: — or let the closing hymn be sung by infant voices; how rich in sentiment is their melody. This sketch has not too warm a coloring; it is only an outline of naked facts. There may be scenes more attractive to the poet's eye or furnishing better materials for the orator, but if one loves to study those

passages of life in which the tender and the sublime of moral nature blend their charms, let him enter, — I say it without fear of contradiction or ridicule from any but those whose ignorance should keep them silent, — let him go to the Sunday school.

The benefits that accrue from this agency constitute the last of its merits on which I shall insist. That the pupils derive benefit need not be shown by any farther remarks, if the purpose and efficiency of the institution be such as they have been described. They however are not the only persons who reap advantage. The teachers are taught. They who impart receive. He who guides the young in wisdom's way is induced to take heed to his own steps. She who kindles the flame of piety in another's heart is feeding the fire in her own soul. My opportunities of observation have led me to doubt whether the instructor or the pupil receive the greater benefit. There is always a reward for doing good, in the growth of benevolent affections and the expansion of generous sympathies ; but here the devout and the social affections are so intimately united, that whether they are brought into common or alternate exercise they strengthen one another. It is believed that in the United States seventyfive thousand teachers are engaged in Sunday schools, and they are taken from the promise and beauty of the land, young men and women, in whom the qualities of early years and of mature age are combined to form a character more interesting than is exhibited at any other period of life. What a connexion may not this great company of teachers hold with the destinies of the republic.

A faithful teacher cannot pursue this employment without feeling the necessity of personal religion, of diligent study of the Bible, of earnest prayer, and of habitual self-control. The oft-quoted remark of the Roman rhetorician respecting the orator was never more true than in the case of the Sunday school teacher; — he must be a *good* man. He must be sincerely and uniformly good. He must be a Christian in head and heart. Unless he is willing and anxious to be such, this is not the place for him. Let him go elsewhere for occupation — the wide world is before him, but here he must not linger, unless in the words of his divine Master he is ready to say to his soul, Wist thou not that I must be about my Father's business. How can this sense of duty, the feeling of responsibility, the conviction of the truth be awakened in his mind, and not make him at once an humbler and a holier man? What shall he do when he discovers, as often the conscious witness will perceive, that he is poorly prepared for the office which he has assumed? Shall he instantly quit it? No — no — for his own sake I would entreat him to stay. Let him remain and improve himself, become a scholar to his own instruction, and lead his pupils in the way they should go, though he be able to precede them by only a single step.

While an acquaintance with his own heart and with the Scriptures must be the fruit of this employment, the teacher will enjoy highly favorable opportunities for studying human nature. He will see it in its true character, before the world has so incrustated or distorted it that its original likeness is lost. He will see many of its varieties, and watch their growth. Mr

Raikes called this 'botanizing in human nature.' Few contributions to intellectual or moral science would be more valuable than a collection of the facts, which must fall under the notice of those who come into such close and frequent intercourse with the young mind.

The benefits of the Sunday school are not confined to those who take a part in its services, whether as instructors or learners. The parent feels the effect of which his child is a recipient. The moral electricity is communicated through the chain of sympathies which unites one to the other. Domestic instruction rises in its character as the child, taught abroad to understand his own wants, makes higher demands. Or where childhood receives no other portion than neglect from its natural teachers, it may become by its incidental remarks or by its constant example the instructor of those who are below it in moral acquisitions. Numerous instances are quoted, in which the order of nature has been reversed, as the feeble child has led a father or a mother to the knowledge of a God and Saviour.

Nor have all the benefits of this institution been yet told. Society is indebted to it for bringing the classes of the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, the refined and the rude into a connexion, by which those are prevented from nourishing an aristocratic selfishness, and these are lifted into a communion with better manners, tastes and habits than those to which they have been accustomed. This effect is congenial with the spirit of Christianity, and is in accordance with the genius of our civil institutions. By the American Christian therefore it will not be esteemed a worthless flower in that perennial chaplet of excellencies with which the Sunday school is crowned.

I scarcely dare to invoke the patience of this audience, which must have already befriended me, while I glance at some difficulties, objections or evils—I know not by what name to describe them,—under which Sunday schools are thought to labor. If we had time, it might be worth our while to consider them at full length, but a few remarks only can now be made.

The first arises among the friends and generally among the teachers of these schools. It is said that there is not an adequate return for all the time, effort and anxiety expended upon them; in other words, that the good which they do is not sufficient to justify the support they receive. This complaint is in the face of much which I have said this evening. It must proceed from those who are impatient to witness the effects of their labor, and who forget that moral results are slow and secret in their growth. Good is done, though we may not see it. Evil is prevented, which we cannot see. Besides, we are not educating children so much for immediate excellence as for the duties and trials of future life, for manhood and womanhood, for death and for eternity. It is unreasonable to repine because we cannot gather fruits which immortality must ripen. How is it with domestic teaching? Are its good effects at once perceived? Are they ever fully known? Are they not so blended with the results of other influences as to elude our powers of discrimination? Yet no one calls in question the immense importance, the priceless value of parental instruction. Let the teacher be content to go on, with a good conscience and a good hope. His 'labor will not be in vain in the Lord.' Time may unfold results beyond his expectation, and in the spiritual world he will see that the

consequences which may be traced to this institution would have justified ten fold, aye, a hundred, a thousand fold the expense of time and effort and interest which it has drawn to itself.

The other objections which we shall notice rest on a directly opposite supposition, viz. that Sunday schools do too much.

And first, they are charged with lessening the amount and impairing the force of domestic instruction. Parents, it is said with perfect truth, should not be relieved of the responsibilities laid on them by the Creator ; it is robbery, it is sacrilege for a stranger to take upon himself their duties. More in the same strain has been urged, but it is entirely irrelevant unless it can be shown, that to spend two or three hours of each week with a child in teaching him his duty to God and man is to trespass on the parental office. I doubt whether reason or fancy be equal to this task. If any parents take advantage of the Sunday school to excuse themselves from the service which God requires of them, they would have neglected their children without this excuse if the Sunday school had never sprung up in their neighborhood. If any can give their offspring better or as good instruction during the hours spent in the school, then let them keep them at home. There should be no compulsion — not even the frown of public sentiment — directed upon him who prefers, on what he deems sufficient reasons, to keep his child on Sunday under his own roof. Violate not the sanctity of the parental office ; it is the ark of the Lord in every household, and unlawful hands must not lay hold of it, even when it seems to totter. Disturb not the order, diminish not the efficacy of domestic teaching ; here are the Sunday schools which God has established, and human arrange-

ments must not subvert divine. But there is time enough and room enough for both. And where the parent will not discharge his duty, then go in charity's name, and save his offspring from ruin. Religion will approve the deed. There are many families, the heads of which cannot give the younger members instruction ; there are many more, where it will not be given ; there are yet others, in which the foreign teaching, auxiliary to the domestic not a substitute for it, will be like streams flowing into a river which enlarge and deepen its current. The instruction of a christian family and that of a Sunday school are not antagonist nor rival powers. They may act together, and each add effect to the other.

It has been further alleged against Sunday schools, that they are sectarian in their character and tendency. Solid as this objection may appear, it is in truth very vague. I apprehend that upon the subject which it brings into view a clear judgment is not always exercised. The cry of sectarianism may be raised against any institution, and to open this cry is to 'let slip the dogs of war.' But in every instance we should require that the charge be explained and substantiated. What is meant by sectarianism, and how is it shown ? If to teach what he considers truth in preference to error or to use fair opportunities of spreading it render one liable to this imputation, I cannot but think that the honest Christian must be willing to bear it. If unfair means be used to inculcate opinions of any sort, or an attempt be made to strengthen a party for other ends than those which justify its existence, then let the alarm be sounded and facts be laid before the public and tendencies be exposed. In other words the abuse of this as of every other institution must be prevented. That it is in dan-

ger of abuse is a ground, not of condemnation, but of watchfulness, — of jealousy it may be, but not of disfavor ; for everything may be turned from its original design, even Christianity, the work and gift of Heaven. A certain kind and degree of sectarianism are unavoidable. What is our preaching, what are our prayers, what our domestic instruction, if they are not sectarian so far as they are conformed to one set of opinions rather than to another — so far as they are Christian rather than Jewish, Protestant more than Catholic, suited to express our own views whatever they may be and not the views which we deem unsound ? More than this I know is intended when we hear of the sectarianism of Sunday schools, but is there reason to apprehend anything more ? If there be, why then before God and man lay hold of the evil, strip it bare of all covering, and let the people see it. It is time that we took pains to have this subject understood. It as little becomes us to join in a wild clamor about Church and State as to be indifferent to the character of measures, from whatever source they may come or whatever disguise they may wear, that would abridge our christian liberty. ‘Church and State’ — they are startling words and fall on American nerves like martial music on a soldier’s ear, who at once ‘puts himself in military attitude. For this very reason they should not be lightly uttered. Words of weighty import should be weighed before they are used. The safeguard of our religious liberties is the activity of sects, which will prevent the Sunday school and other similar institutions from becoming the property or agent exclusively of any particular Church. That it may be made a mighty instrument for bad as well as for good ends no one will deny ; that it is the most effectual means which can be devised, in a

land where knowledge circulates, for diffusing and transmitting error is, I think, obvious ; and when I consider this its capacity of working mischief, and remember also the ease with which men may deceive themselves concerning their motives, I (do not doubt the excellence of the institution, but) feel the importance of bringing it into such general use and subjecting it to such public notice that the possible evils may be checked or counteracted. Let the Christian be faithful and the patriot be vigilant, and neither the country nor the truth will be in danger.

Still facilities are here created for prepossessing the mind with opinions on which it should be left to form its own conclusions. And hence arises the last serious objection to Sunday schools—that they despoil the mind of its freedom before it knows the value of the gift, and cause it perhaps always afterwards to walk in fetters. We have been told that it interferes with that personal responsibility which is the prerogative of the soul, and erects barriers before that free inquiry from which the progress of mankind is inseparable. To this as to the former article in the complaint filed against this institution, of which reason alone must take cognisance, we reply that it is not when properly conducted more liable to this suspicion than parental teaching or the public offices of the ministry, and that unless we are willing to leave childhood without religious instruction we must incur the risk of implanting too strong a bias in favor of our own sentiments. The apprehension of the evil will however be its preventive ; and this apprehension cannot be too watchful. In one sense, freedom should be the great law of the Sunday school. The understanding should be taught to exert its own

powers, and not to lay them at the feet of authority. Conscience should be quickened, not enslaved. Individual character should never be disregarded in an observance of general rules. The child should not be treated like a parrot or a machine, but, even the smallest and the most ignorant, like a free and immortal spirit. I therefore dread the introduction of too much plan and art into these schools. The word 'system' is almost offensive, since it indicates an arrangement of means which I fear may be stiff and unalterable. Freedom, the greatest possible which is consistent with order and improvement—be this maintained in the instruction of the school. Any system which may not be adapted to varieties of intellectual and moral character, or the defects of which may not be remedied as they shall be discovered on experiment, carries its condemnation in its own bosom. It should have no place, and find no favor among us. If I were not convinced that the Sunday school may be made the patron of free inquiry, by giving a healthful tone to the mind and saving it from hurtful prejudices, I would rather appear as its opposer than as its advocate.

By offering these imperfect views of the origin, character, and securities of the institution whose jubilee we this evening celebrate, I have endeavored to perform the service requested of me by a Society established for its encouragement. We trust that they will descend together to the next generation, or if the Divine Providence should suggest a better form in which our sympathies may express themselves that it will be cheerfully adopted. The institution will remain, for it *must* continue. Humanity and faith will conspire to preserve it. Patriotism and religion will cherish it. On the next

jubilee the children which are now the objects of its care will have become its venerable guardians, or have passed beyond earthly duties and privileges. Who can tell what numbers it may before that period embrace within its arms, or to what an extent of efficiency it may have been carried. The offspring of Christianity, though late in its birth yet of rapid growth, it will attend our religion in its progress, till in every land the words of ancient prediction shall have received fulfilment, — ‘all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.’ In the anticipation of that hour, as we spread the map of the world before us and people its countries with the forms of coming generations, whose soul is not kindled as with prophetic fire? Civilization and Christianity extend themselves over lands that now lie under the ‘shadow of death’; the Sunday school here precedes, there follows them, waking youthful voices to hymns of praise and moving infant hearts to offices of prayer. Millions, tens and hundreds of millions, of immortal beings acknowledge its benefits. The earth is redeemed from the power of sin. Then shall they no more teach one another, ‘for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.’ Welcome, though in distant view, times of grace and glory; welcome, to these rejoicing eyes, to these believing hearts.



—

—

NOTES.

I. PAGE 6.

This account may be found in the fifteenth chapter of 'Memoirs of the Life of the late Mrs Catharine Cappe, written by herself.' — pp. 103 — 109 of the American edition.

II. PAGE 8.

Charles Borromeo, was born in 1538, and was made archbishop of Milan by his uncle, Pope Pius IV. at the early age of 22 years. — He died in 1584. Eustace in his 'Classical Tour through Italy,' speaks of the schools established by Borromeo in two passages, which as they are brief, I have copied from the second volume of the second edition, published in 1814.

'Many of his excellent institutions still remain, and among others that of Sunday schools; and it is both novel and affecting to behold on that day the vast area of the Cathedral filled with children forming two grand divisions of boys and girls ranged opposite each other, and these again subdivided into classes according to their age and capacities, drawn up between the pillars, while two or more instructors attend each class, and direct their questions and explanations to every little individual without distinction. A clergyman attends each class, accompanied by one or more laymen for the boys, and for the girls by as many matrons. The lay persons are said to be oftentimes of the first distinction. Tables are placed in different recesses for writing. This admirable practice, so beneficial and so edifying, is not confined to the Cathedral or even to Milan. The pious archbishop extended it to every part of his extensive diocese, and it is observed in all the parochial churches of the Milanese, and of the neighboring dioceses, of such at least as are suffragans of Milan.' p. 319.

'In the diocese of Milan, or to speak more properly, in the vast tracts of country included between the Alps and the Appenines, and subject to the visitation of the archiepiscopal see of Milan, in every parochial church the bell tolls at two o'clock on every Sunday in the year, and all the youth of the parish assemble in the church; the girls are placed on one side, the boys on the other.

They are then divided into classes according to their ages and their progress, and instructed either by the clergy attached to the church or by pious persons who voluntarily devote their time to this most useful employment; while the pastor himself goes from class to class, examines sometimes one and sometimes another, and closes the whole at four o'clock by a catechistical discourse. The writer first observed this mode of instruction at Desensano on the borders of the Lago di Garda, then at Mantua, and finally in the Cathedral at Milan, whose immense nave and aisles, almost equal in extent to St Peter's, were then crowded with youths and with children. He was struck more than once with the great readiness of the answers, and often edified by the patience and assiduity of the teachers.' pp. 491, 2.

I am indebted to Mr J. W. Ingraham of this city for some farther references on the subject of Catholic Sunday schools. Rev. Daniel Wilson visited Milan in 1823, and in the second volume of his 'Tour on the Continent' describes them in nearly the same terms as Eustace, adding that they constitute 'one of the peculiarities of the diocese of Milan.' 'Borromeo,' observes Mr Ingraham, 'merely modified and put into practice the established regulations of his Church. I recollect seeing in Van Espen's Ecclesiastical Law, and also in the Decretals of Gregory IX., about 1227, a provision for schools on Sunday conducted by laymen, very nearly the same as our modern Sunday schools. My references are to Van Espen, Jus. Eccles. Vol. I. Part. II. Sect. I. Title II. Cap. V.; and Dec. Greg. IX. cap. 3.'

III. PAGE 11.

This letter appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1784. It was introduced by a brief note to the editor, who added a remark which time will unquestionably verify. As the letter is characteristic of its author, and as I do not know that it has been published entire in this country, I subjoin the whole article from the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. 54, (1st vol. of the year 1784) pp. 410 — 412.

SHEFFIELD, MAY 18.

MR URBAN, — The GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE has long been considered as the Repository of every useful and valuable project; I flatter myself, therefore, that you will think the following copy of a letter from Mr Raikes of Gloucester, on his new and excellent scheme of Sunday schools, worth preserving. The importance of

the subject, and the benevolent manner in which it is expressed, justly entitle it to the attentive regard of every virtuous man. It is one very direct means to bring about that reformation of manners, which is so much wanted at present, consequently is worthy the especial notice of our clergy and magistrates. I have the pleasure to add, that, by a paragraph in the York Chronicle of the 6th inst. it appears, that the inhabitants of Leeds have, very much to their honor, adopted the plan, and have already eighteen hundred children engaged. The towns of Huddersfield and Dewsbury are likewise endeavoring to follow so meritorious an example.

Yours, &c.

A FRIEND TO VIRTUE.

GLOUCESTER, NOV. 25.

SIR — My friend the mayor has just communicated to me the letter which you have honored him with, inquiring into the nature of Sunday schools. The beginning of this scheme was entirely owing to accident. Some business leading me one morning into the suburbs of the city, where the lowest of the people (who are principally employed in the pin manufactory) chiefly reside, I was struck with concern at seeing a group of children, wretchedly ragged, at play in the street. I asked an inhabitant whether those children belonged to that part of the town and lamented their misery and idleness. Ah! sir, said the woman to whom I was speaking, could you take a view of this part of the town on a Sunday, you would be shocked indeed; for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released on that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at church, and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid, as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell, rather than any other place. We have a worthy clergyman, said she, curate of our parish, who has put some of them to school; but upon the sabbath they are all given up to follow their own inclinations without restraint, as their parents, totally abandoned themselves, have no idea of instilling into the minds of their children principles to which they themselves are entire strangers.

This conversation suggested to me, that it would be at least a harmless attempt, if it were productive of no good, should some little plan be formed to check this deplorable profanation of the sabbath. I then inquired of the woman, if there were any decent, well dis-

posed women in the neighborhood, who kept schools for teaching to read. I presently was directed to four; to these I applied, and made an agreement with them, to receive as many children as I should send upon the Sunday, whom they were to instruct in reading and in the Church catechism. For this I engaged to pay them each a shilling for their day's employment. The women seemed pleased with the proposal. I then waited on the clergyman before mentioned, and imparted to him my plan; he was so much satisfied with the idea, that he engaged to lend his assistance, by going round to the schools on a Sunday afternoon, to examine the progress that was made, and to enforce order and decorum among such a set of little heathens.

This, sir, was the commencement of the plan. It is now about three years since we began, and I could wish you were here to make inquiry into the effect. A woman who lives in a lane where I had fixed a school told me some time ago, that the place was quite a heaven upon Sundays, compared to what it used to be. The numbers who have learned to read and say their catechism are so great that I am astonished at it. Upon the Sunday afternoon, the mistresses take their scholars to church, a place to which neither they nor their ancestors had ever before entered with a view to the glory of God. But what is yet more extraordinary, within this month these little raga-muffins have in great numbers taken it into their heads to frequent the early morning prayers, which are held every morning at the Cathedral at 7 o'clock. I believe there were near fifty this morning. They assemble at the house of one of the mistresses, and walk before her to church, two and two, in as much order as a company of soldiers. I am generally at church, and after service they all come round to me to make their bow; and, if any animosities have arisen, to make complaints. The great principle I inculcate, is, to be kind and good natured to each other; not to provoke one another; to be dutiful to their parents; not to offend God by cursing and swearing, and such little plain precepts as all may comprehend. As my profession is that of a printer, I have printed a little book which I gave amongst them; and some friends of mine, subscribers to the Society for promoting christian knowledge, sometimes make me a present of a parcel of Bibles, Testaments, &c, which I distribute as rewards to the deserving. The success that has attended this scheme has induced one or two of my friends to

adopt the plan and set up Sunday schools in other parts of the city, and now a whole parish has taken up the object; so that I flatter myself in time the good effects will appear so conspicuous as to become generally adopted. The number of children at present thus engaged on the sabbath are between two and three hundred, and they are increasing every week, as the benefit is universally seen. I have endeavored to engage the clergy of my acquaintance that reside in their parishes; one has entered into the scheme with great fervour, and it was in order to excite others to follow the example, that I inserted in my paper the paragraph which I suppose you saw copied into the London papers. I cannot express to you the pleasure I often receive in discovering genius and innate good dispositions, among this little multitude. It is botanizing in human nature. I have often too, the satisfaction of receiving thanks from parents, for the reformation they perceive in their children. Often I have given them kind admonitions, which I always do in the mildest and gentlest manner. The going among them, doing them little kindnesses, distributing trifling rewards, and ingratiating myself with them, I hear, have given me an ascendancy, greater than I ever could have imagined; for I am told by their mistresses that they are very much afraid of my displeasure. If you ever pass through Gloucester, I shall be happy to pay my respects to you, and to show you the effects of this effort at civilization. If the glory of God be promoted in any, even the smallest degree, society must reap some benefit. If good seed be sown in the mind at an early period of human life, though it shows itself not again for many years, it may please God, at some future period, to cause it to spring up, and to bring forth a plentiful harvest. With regard to the rules adopted, I only require that they come to the school on Sunday as clean as possible. Many were at first deterred, because they wanted decent clothing, but I could not undertake to supply this defect. I argue, therefore, if you can loiter about without shoes and in a ragged coat, you may as well come to school, and learn what may tend to your good in that garb. I reject none on that footing. All that I require, are clean hands, clean face, and the hair combed; if you have no clean shirt, come in that which you have on. The want of decent apparel at first kept great numbers at a distance, but they now begin to grow wiser, and all are pressing to learn. I have had the good luck to procure places for some that were deserving, which

has been of great use. You will understand that these children are from 6 years old to 12 or 14. Boys and girls above this age, who have been totally undisciplined, are generally too refractory for this government. A reformation in society seems to me only practicable by establishing motives of duty, and practical habits of order and decorum, at an early stage. But whither am I running? I am ashamed to see how much I have trespassed on your patience; but I thought the most complete idea of Sunday schools, was to be conveyed to you by telling what first suggested the thought. The same sentiments would have arisen in your mind, had they happened to have been called forth as they were suggested to me.

I have no doubt that you will find great improvement to be made on this plan. The minds of men have taken great hold on that prejudice, that we are to do nothing on the Sabbath day which may be deemed labor, and therefore we are to be excused from all application of mind as well as body. The rooting out this prejudice is the point I aim at as my favorite object. Our Saviour takes particular pains to manifest, that whatever tended to promote the health and happiness of our fellow creatures, were sacrifices peculiarly acceptable on that day. I do not think I have written so long a letter for some years. But you will excuse me — my heart is warm in the cause. I think this is the kind of reformation most requisite in this Kingdom. Let our patriots employ themselves in rescuing their countrymen from that despotism, which tyrannical passions and vicious inclinations exercise over them, and they will find that true liberty and national welfare are more essentially promoted, than by any reform in Parliament.

As often as I have attempted to conclude, some new idea has arisen. This is strange, as I am writing to a person whom I never have, and perhaps never may see — but I have felt that we think alike. I shall therefore only add my ardent wishes, that your views of promoting the happiness of society may be attended with every possible success, conscious that your own internal enjoyment will thereby be considerably advanced. I have the honor to be, Sir,

Yours, &c.

R. RAIKES.

* * It is with pleasure we give place to this benevolent plan; which promises fair to transmit the name of Mr Raikes to the latest posterity.

The notice to which allusion is made in this letter, and which is mentioned in page 11 of the Address, is also distinguished by the modesty which was a feature of Mr Raikes's character. I give it as I find it in the Introduction to the 'Sunday School Teacher's Guide, by J. A. James,' into which it is copied from the Gloucester Journal of Nov. 8, 1783.

'Some of the clergy in different parts of this country, bent upon attempting a reform among the children of the lower class, are establishing Sunday schools for rendering the Lord's day subservient to the ends of instruction, which has hitherto been prostituted to bad purposes. Farmers and other inhabitants of the towns and villages, complain that they receive more injury in their property on the Sabbath than all the week besides; this in a great measure proceeds from the lawless state of the younger class, who are allowed to run wild on that day, free from every restraint. To remedy this evil, persons duly qualified, are employed to instruct those that cannot read; and those who may have learnt to read, are taught the catechism, and conducted to church. By thus keeping their minds engaged, the day passes profitably and not disagreeably. In those parishes where this plan has been adopted, we are assured that the behavior of the children is greatly civilized. The barbarous ignorance in which they had before lived being in some degree dispelled, they begin to give proofs that those persons are mistaken, who consider the lower orders of mankind as incapable of improvement, and therefore think an attempt to reclaim them impracticable, or at least not worth the trouble.'

IV. PAGE 20.

An account of the dedication of this building is given in the Monthly Repository, vol. 15 (for 1820), pages 294—296. Notices of the interest taken in Sunday schools by Unitarians in England may be found in various volumes of the Repository.

V. PAGE 20.

These facts were communicated to me by Rev. Dr Lowell, pastor of the West Church, from whom, in consequence of a request for more particular information, I have received a note which I am permitted to publish.

DEAR SIR, — You request me to give you an account of the origin of the West Parish sunday school, the oldest, as far as I know, in this city. In 1811, a charity school was established in the west part of Boston, chiefly through the exertions of Mr Bartlett, then chaplain at the almshouse, now one of the ministers at Marblehead. In October, 1812, the teacher of that school, Miss Lydia K. Adams, then a member of the West Parish, having learned, on a visit to Beverly, that some young ladies of that town were in the practice of giving religious instruction to poor children on the sabbath, consulted her minister on the expediency of giving like instruction to the children of her school, and to those who had been members of it, on the same day. The project was decidedly approved, and immediately carried into effect. In December of the same year, Miss Adams was compelled by ill health to leave the school, and ladies of the West Church took charge of it, and, in turn, instructed the children, both on the week days and the sabbath, till a suitable permanent teacher could be obtained. On this event, they relinquished the immediate care of the week day school, but continued the instruction of the Sunday school, till it was transferred to the church, and was enlarged by the addition of the children of a different description.

Affectionately your friend and brother,

CHARLES LOWELL

BOSTON, SEPT. 28, 1831.

I do not know that any Sunday school was taught in New England before the year 1812, unless it were the one in Beverly which was the occasion of that in the West Parish. I learn from Mr Ingraham, that a Sunday school was established in Hudson in 1803, and one in Philadelphia as early as 1790, both by Episcopalians.

CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The fifteenth anniversary since the first establishment of Sunday schools in Great Britain was celebrated at the Federal street Church, by the Boston Sunday School Society, on the evening of Sept. 14th. The interest of the occasion assembled a very numerous and respectable audience. The services were introduced by an anthem, which was followed by a prayer by Rev. Mr Farley, of Providence. The following hymn, written for the occasion by Dr Thomas Gray, Jr, was then sung.

HYMN.

While round thy shrine, O God, we bend,
Let our united praises rise ;
And from a thousand tongues ascend
The heart's accepted sacrifice.

Let living light, from thy blest word,
Guide those who seek, and teach thy way ;
And may each opening flower, O Lord,
Drink life from that eternal ray.

Bless those who first this vineyard dress'd :
They reaped in joy, but sowed in doubt —
They smote the rock, and from its breast
Leaped life's eternal waters out.

And let the peace thy word imparts,
To us, and to our children be ;
We fain would bring their trusting hearts,
In trusting love, O God, to thee.

May that blest word their lives control,
Till life be o'er, with power divine ;
Eternal then, as ages roll,
Our children's children shall be thine.

The address by Rev. Mr Gannett succeeded. This was followed by the following occasional hymn by Rev. John Pierpont.

HYMN.

Father of lights ! we bless each ray
 Shot from thy throne to lead the blind :
 With song we hail the holy day
 That 's dawning on the youthful mind.

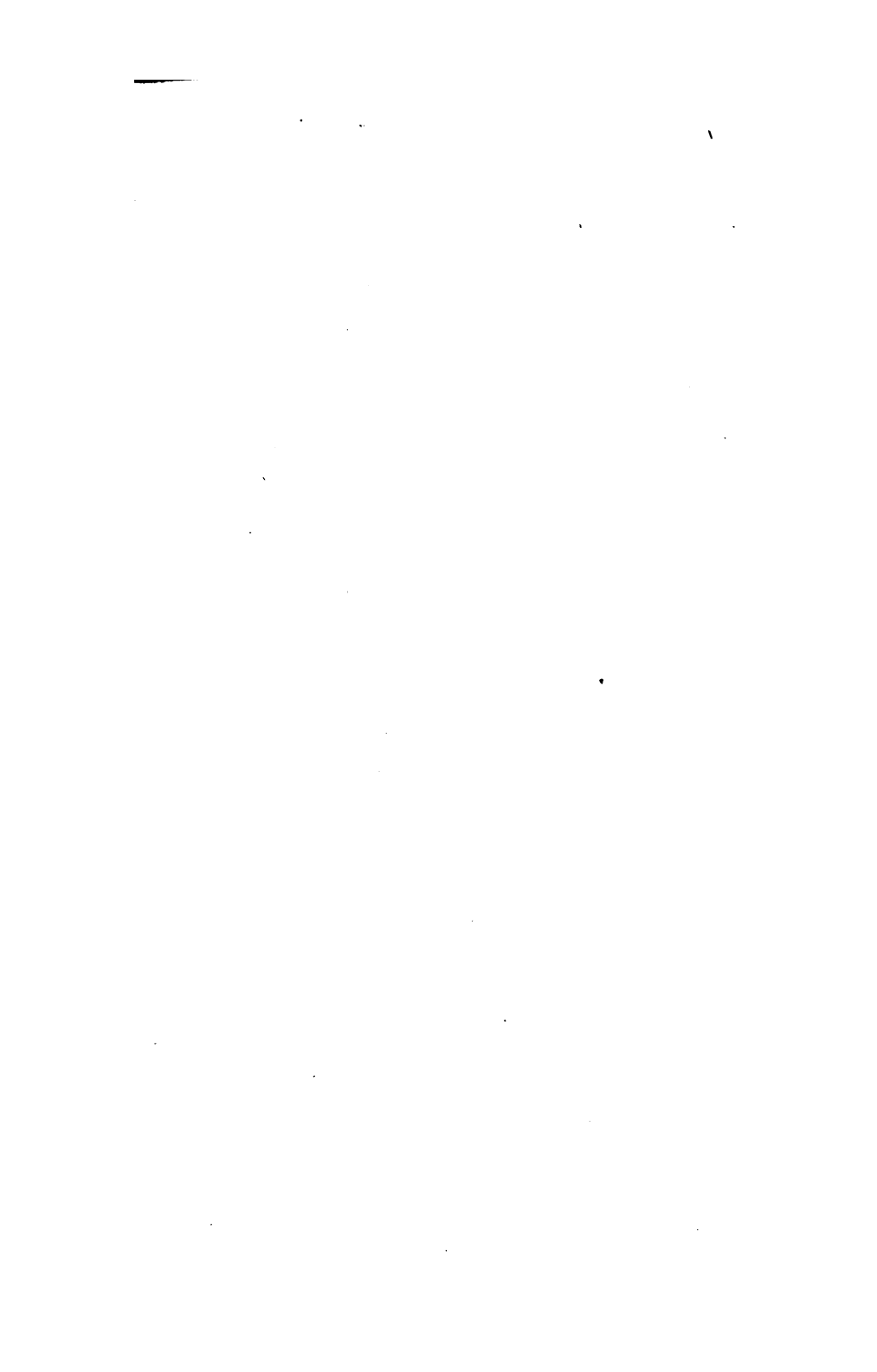
Gone is the gloom ! the cold eclipse,
 In which the ignorant at thee gaze,
 Has passed ; and now from infant lips
 Art thou, O God, perfecting praise.

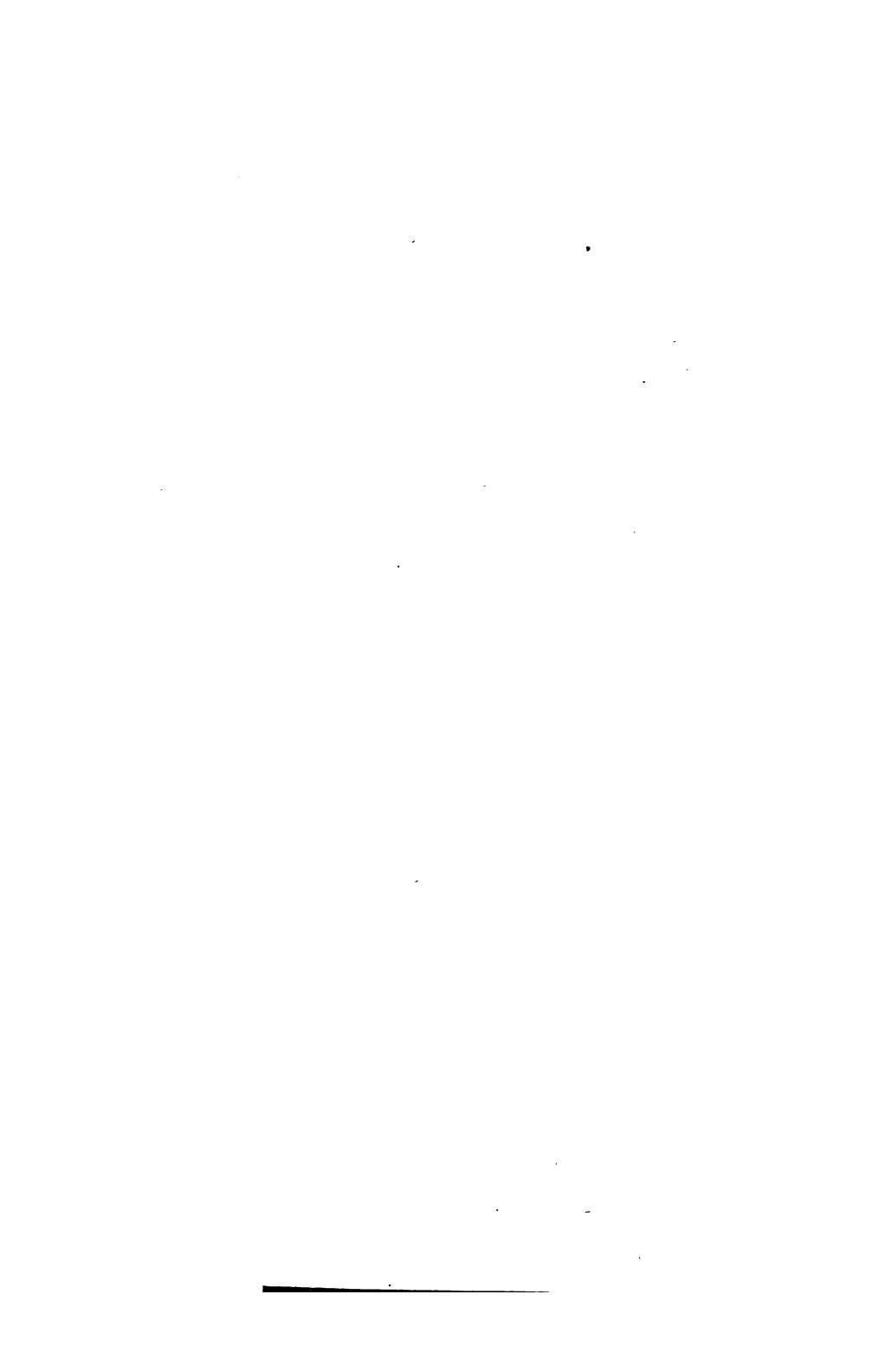
Bishop of souls, whose arms were spread,
 To clasp and bless such little ones,
 On these be thine own spirit shed,
 That they may be thy Father's sons !

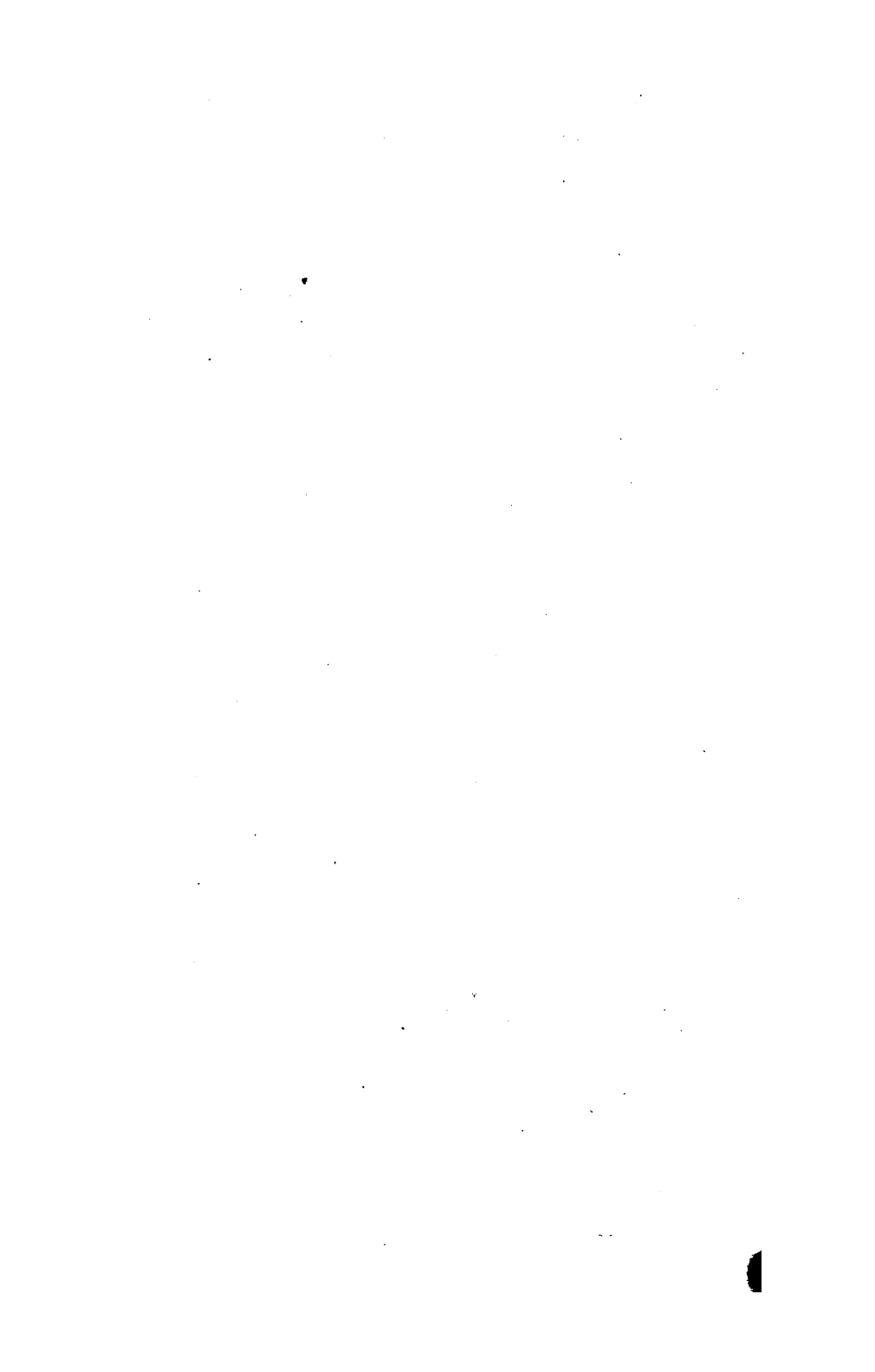
Friends of the young, whose toils are o'er,
 Taste ye in heaven a purer bliss,
 Or one that now ye cherish more
 Than that which comes from days like this ?

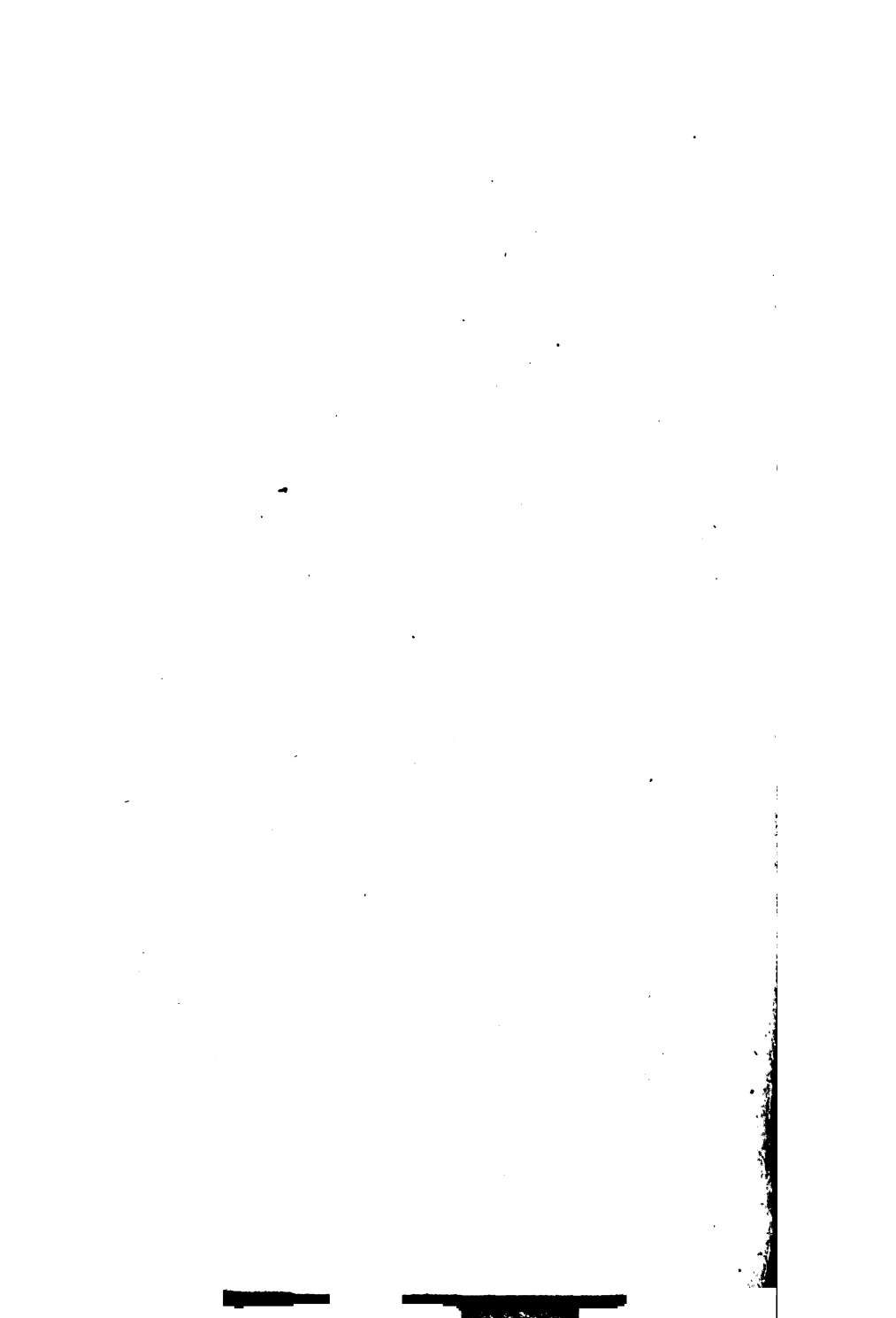
Author of life ! when death's cold hand
 Is gently on our eyelids pressed,
 May sorrowing children round us stand —
 The children whom our cares have blessed.

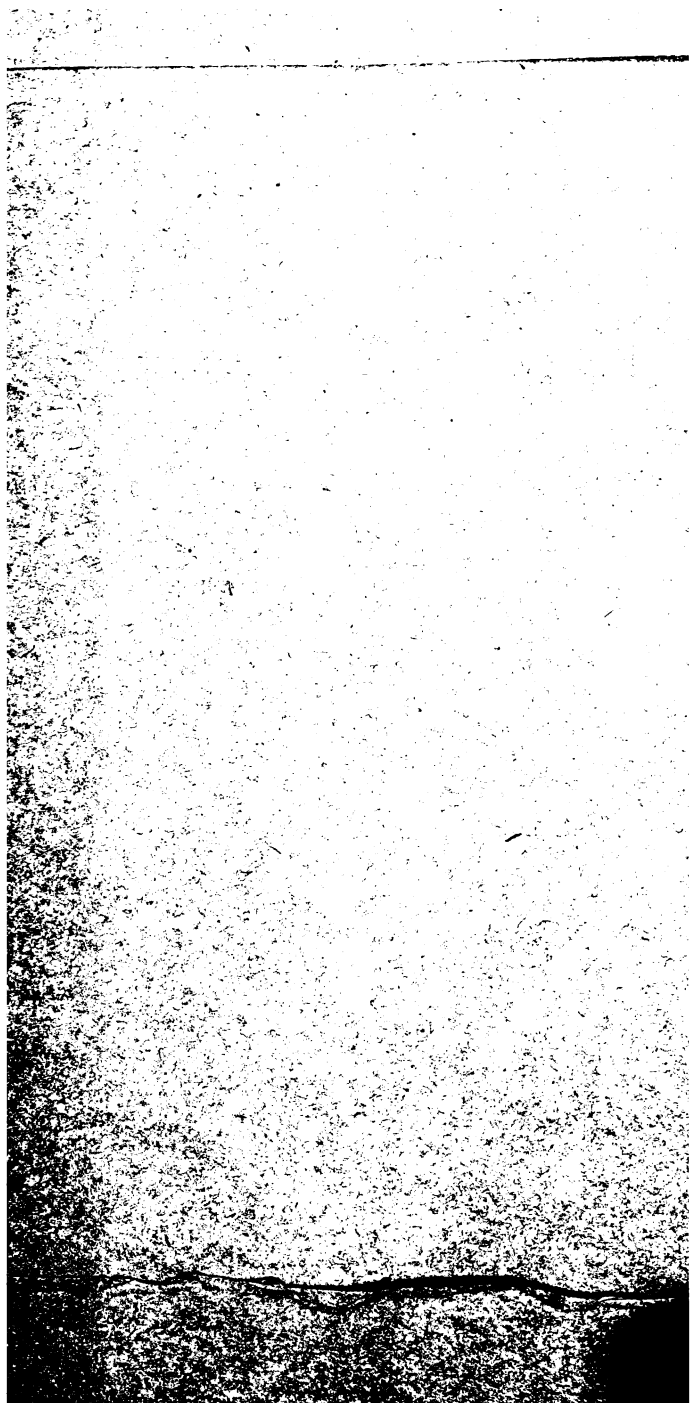
The attentive silence of the large assembly during the address, the fine effect of the music, the interest arising from the consideration that here were met Christians of every denomination as on common ground, all engaged in a common cause, and worshipping a common Father, conspired to give the deepest and most solemn interest to the occasion ; and we doubt not that the impression of that evening will long be remembered.



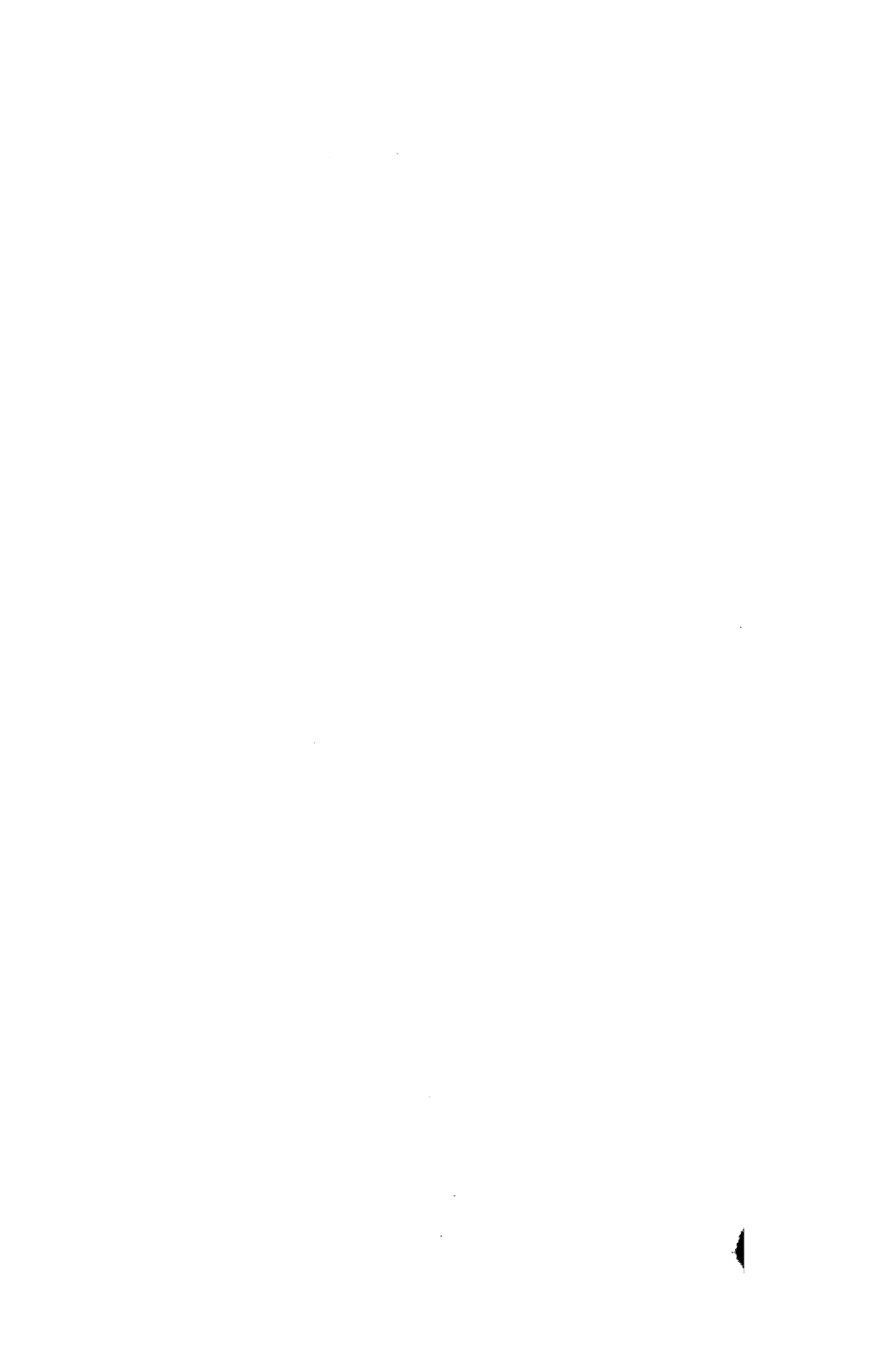














This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.

Please return promptly.

MAY 1 '51 H

MAR - 8 '55 H

MAY 1 '51 H

MAY 14 '51 H

